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RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 6768  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000864

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DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#) [ELECTIONS](#)  
SUBJECT: MARWA ON ELECTIONS, AIRLINES

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Classified By: Political Counselor Russell J. Hanks for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: General Buba Marwa (rtd.) discussed Nigeria's recent elections immediately following the official ceremony where INEC Chairman Iwu handed over the victory certificate to PDP Presidential candidate Yar'Adua. Marwa speculated that the "embarrassing" results of the Presidential polls were based on surprises in the Gubernatorial elections. Still, he commented, what choice do we have but to move ahead with Yar'Adua. He also complained that his grounded al-Barka airlines had been singled out while another startup emerged with "questionable connections and funding sources." Marwa did not seem comfortable with Nigeria's political future, but he seemed resolved to play whatever role was necessary in supporting the PDP's efforts to consolidate its "questionable victories." END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Buba Marwa, a retired general, former military governor of two states, chairman of the grounded al-Barka airlines and one-time PDP Presidential aspirant, discussed Nigeria's recent elections with PolCouns. He phoned immediately following the official ceremony where the national elections commission (INEC) Chairman Maurice Iwu handed over the victory certificate to PDP Presidential candidate Governor Umaru Yar'Adua.

¶3. (C) Marwa appeared resigned to his relegated role as a supporting player in the current political constellation. He complained that the PDP convention had been anything but transparent, saying that he was told the exact number of votes he would get during the convention prior to arriving at the venue. Marwa expressed his concern about the "excesses" committed by party members in inflating vote totals, but held to the party line that "Yar'Adua would have won anyway."

¶4. (C) Marwa commented that his own security sources had been surprised by the results emerging from the Gubernatorial elections. He claimed he was informed by these sources that "the PDP lost all six states in the Southwest and was losing in the South South and the Southeast." He said he had been told that Vice President Atiku's AC party had won three states, Buhari's ANPP had won two and the Labor Party had one won of the six states in the region. He said that the devastating returns emerging from the South were

"embarrassing" to the President and speculated that the "lack of voting" during the Presidential polls was based on these surprises in the Gubernatorial elections.

15. (C) Marwa then returned to the party line, commenting that Nigeria had "no choice but to move ahead with Yar'Adua." He tried to support the thought that Yar'Adua would be a "good president anyway," but worried that he would not be able to "choose his own cabinet." Marwa said that President Obasanjo had already given Yar'Adua the names of four ministers and had chosen Yar'Adua's chief of staff. He said Obasanjo planned to name at least nine more ministers "that I know of." Marwa refused to speculate on his own role in the next government, but his name has surfaced with rumors that he will be the next Minister of Defense. He said that it would be difficult for Yar'Adua to "extricate himself" from President Obasanjo for at least six months and this would make reconciliation and legitimacy "difficult."

16. (C) Turning to a more personal matter, he also complained about his al-Barka Airline's grounding by "Obasanjo's people." He fretted that he had been singled out even while another startup emerged with "questionable connections and funding sources." Marwa said that Arik Airlines, among the newest of Nigeria's revolving-door aviation companies, "was owned by Governor Odili and Obasanjo was a silent investor." He asked rhetorically how this new start-up was able to raise one and a half billion dollars to buy new Boeing jets.

17. (C) COMMENT: General Marwa was one of the governors under the Abacha regime that was widely viewed as a stellar performer. He won popular support in his home area as Governor of Borno and in the Southwest as Governor of Lagos and appeared to be one of a new generation of better-educated professionals in Nigeria. With his failure as a Presidential candidate, he does not see any choice but to support the

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elements of the ruling party that remain in charge of the country. Even though he did not seem comfortable with Nigeria's political prospects, he seemed resolved to play whatever role was necessary in supporting the ruling party's efforts to consolidate its "questionable victories."  
CAMPBELL